

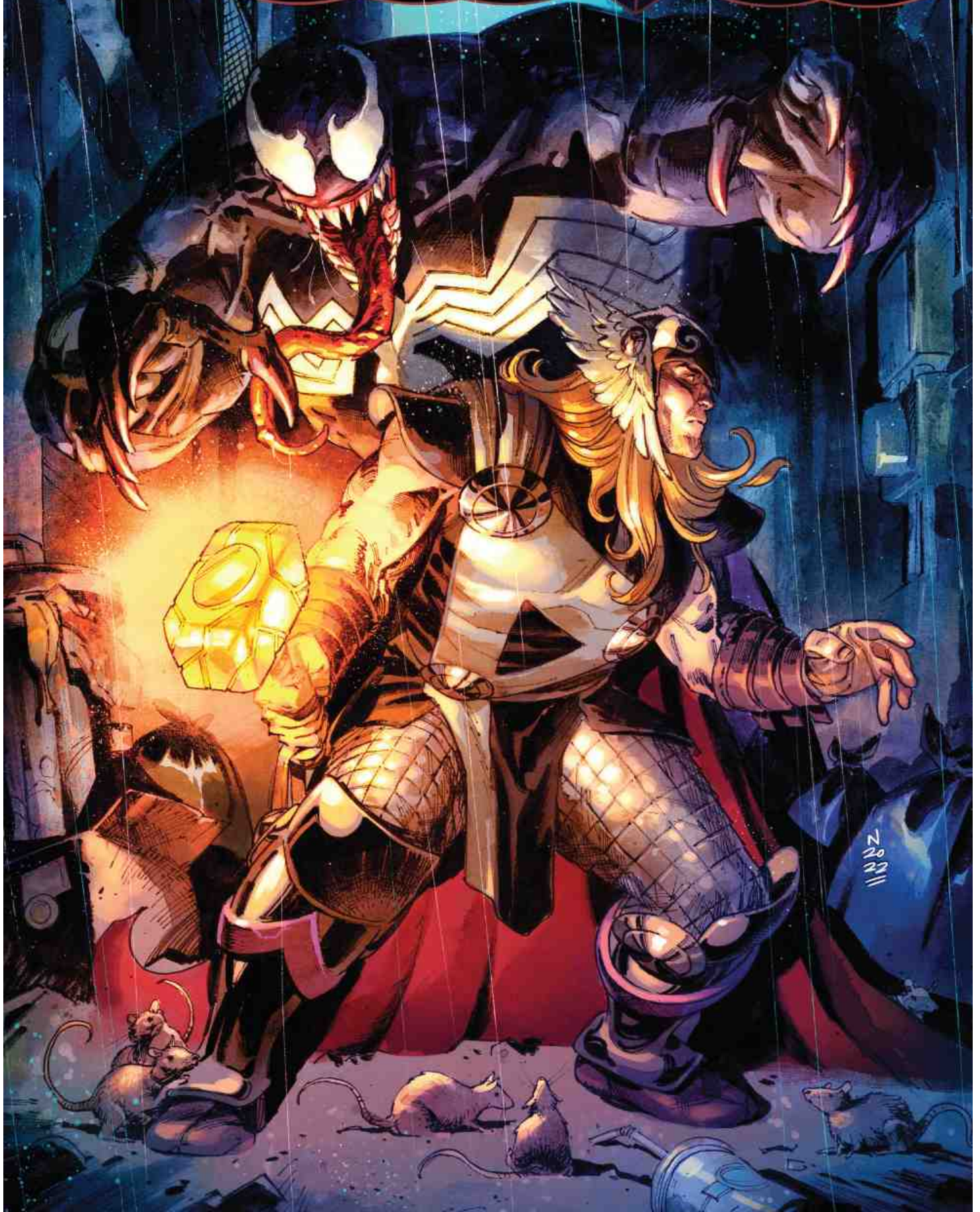
MARVEL

27

LGY#753

EWING
CATES
LARROCA
DELGADO

THOR



11/22/11

THOR

"VENOM OF ASGARD" PART ONE

THOR IS THE KING OF ASGARD, HAVING RECENTLY TAKEN OVER FOR HIS FATHER, ODIN. HE IS STRUGGLING TO BALANCE HIS ROLE AS THE ALL-FATHER WITH HIS ROLE AS ONE OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES ON THE AVENGERS. RECENTLY, ODIN DIED IN BATTLE, AND HIS SPIRIT NOW INHABITS THOR'S HAMMER, MJOLNIR.

DURING A CATASTROPHIC BATTLE BETWEEN THOR AND THE HULK, THOR WAS EXPOSED TO A MASSIVE EXPLOSION OF GAMMA RADIATION THAT TURNED HIM INTO HIS OWN VERSION OF THE HULK—A HULKED-OUT GOD OF THUNDER! WITH THE HELP OF BRUCE BANNER, ODIN'S SPIRIT MANAGED TO SUBDUE THOR AND RETURN HIM TO NORMAL, BUT NOT BEFORE THOR HAD WREAKED HAVOC ON THE GOLDEN REALM...AND DESTROYED THE BIFROST.

AL EWING & DONNY CATES
PLOT

AL EWING
SCRIPT

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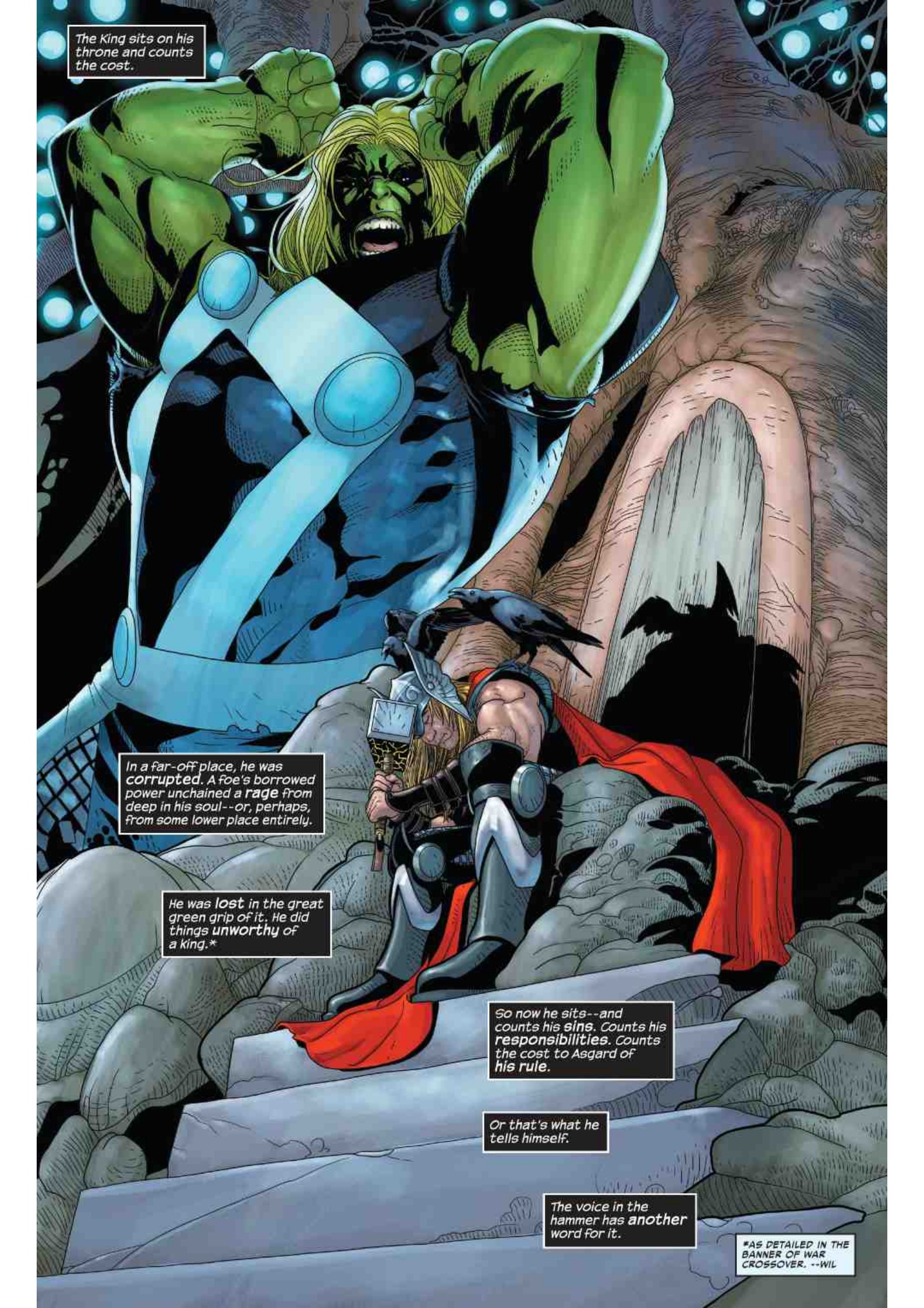
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THOR created by SCAN LEE, LARRY LIEBER & JACK KIRBY



The King sits on his throne and counts the cost.

In a far-off place, he was corrupted. A foe's borrowed power unchained a **rage** from deep in his soul--or, perhaps, from some lower place entirely.

He was **lost** in the great green grip of it. He did things **unworthy** of a king.*

So now he sits--and counts his **sins**. Counts his **responsibilities**. Counts the cost to Asgard of his rule.

Or that's what he tells himself.

The voice in the hammer has **another** word for it.

*AS DETAILED IN THE BANNER OF WAR CROSSOVER. --WIL







"MAKE SURE HE'S
STILL WHERE I
LEFT HIM."

AAAAHHHH!

AAAAHHHHH!

In the catacombs of Asgard
is a man born of Odin's magic.
He spilled an **ocean of
blood** because he wanted
to live as a God does.

Loki called him brother
and granted his wish.

Donald Blake lives the life
of a God. Specifically, the
life of **Loki himself**, in time
gone by--chained down,
with a **serpent** dripping
poison into his eyeballs.

All hail the new
God of Lies.



Loki has not
yet told Thor
of this.

AND
WHERE DID
YOU LEAVE
HIM?

THE
ELK RESTS
WITH ME, LOKI. I
GAVE YOU THE DUTY
OF PUNISHMENT FOR
THE BLOOD ON BLAKE'S
HANDS--BUT I MISLIKE
NOT KNOWING WHAT
THAT PUNISHMENT
WAS.



AND I TOLD
YOU NOT TO ASK,
THOR. I'D ONLY HAVE
TO LIE TO YOU,
AFTER ALL...

...AND
THAT'S NOT
MY JOB
ANYMORE.



BLAKE'S
PAYING THE
PRICE FOR THE
CHOICES HE
MADE.

IT'S AN
OLD PRICE--A
BLOOD PRICE--
BUT THERE'S
JUSTICE IN
IT, IF YOU
SQUINT.

AND
BETTER HIM
THAN ME.



LOKI...

ENOUGH!
LET THE
STORYTELLER KEEP
THEIR PRECIOUS
SECRETS!

YOU'D
WASTE TIME
FUSSING OVER YOUR
ENEMIES WHEN YOUR
SUBJECTS NEED THINE
AID? PRIORITIES,
BOY!



...
PRIORITIES.
AYE.

THE
BIFROST
IS BROKEN,
LOKI.



I HEARD.

NOT A PROBLEM FOR YOUR
MAJESTY, IF MJOLNIR CAN
STILL SUMMON THE
DIMENSIONAL WINDS--BUT
THE AVERAGE ASGARDIAN
HAS A RIGHT TO
FREEDOM OF
MOVEMENT.

BIT OF A TRICKY
INFRASTRUCTURE
PROBLEM FOR A NEW
ALL-FATHER. HOW'S
YOUR POLL
RATING?



THE RAINBOW
BRIDGE WAS CREATED
BY MYCH AND BY MAGIC.
BROTHER--YOU'RE AN
EXPERT ON BOTH. WILL
JOTUNHEIM HELP
ASGARD ONCE
AGAIN?

I'LL
EVEN LET
YOU PICK THE
COLORS.



YOU NEED A
BIFROST--I'M A
BI FROST GIANT.
IT'S FACE!

HOW
CAN I SAY
NO?

HOURS LATER...

I MEAN, THE WORD "NO" GENERALLY DOES IT. I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT ONE.

MAYBE THEN I WOULDN'T HAVE WASTED MY WHOLE AFTERNOON...

I AGREE. YOU SHOULD HAVE ASKED A PROFESSIONAL, THOR.

DOCTOR STRANGE COULD FINISH THIS JOB FASTER THAN YOUR LACKWIT SIBLING...

DOCTOR STRANGE IS CURRENTLY DEAD, LADY SIF.

AND YET WHERE IS THE LIE?



OH, HA HA. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, THIS IS ACTUALLY A VERY THORNY MAGICAL PROBLEM.

SEE, THOR DID BREAK THE BIFROST--BUT THE BRIDGE IS STILL CONNECTED TO ASGARD IN WAYS THAT CAN'T BE SUNDERED EVEN BY A HULKED-OUT ALL-FATHER.



SO THE IDEA OF THE BIFROST--THE MAGICAL ESSENCE--IS STILL HERE. BUT ALL IT'S DOING IS BLOCKING NEW CONSTRUCTION.

CLEARING THIS MYSTIC "RUBBLE" COULD TAKE A MONTH OR TEN THOUSAND YEARS...

AND ASGARD IS CUT OFF FROM THE OTHER REALMS UNTIL THEN? WE'RE HELPLESS?



I NEVER SAID *THAT*. THIS COULD BE *TRICKY*... BUT *TRICKY'S* WHAT I DO.

ASGARD DOESN'T NEED THE BIFROST, THOR.



YOU'D LIKE THE BIFROST BECAUSE IT'S WHAT YOU HAD *BEFORE* AND YOU KNOW HOW IT *WORKS*.

BUT OTHER MAGICAL TRANSPORTATION METHODS ARE AVAILABLE. EVEN *MIDGARD'S* TECHNOLOGY MIGHT SERVE US HERE-- IF WE COULD BRING IT UP TO OUR STANDARDS.

AYE. I ENJOY *MIDGARD'S* TECHNOLOGY.



CAN A HAMMER FIRE A GUN?

LET US *NOT* FIND OUT!



I MEAN...THE MACHINES OF *MIDGARD* HAVE THEIR *PLACE*. BUT I'D PREFER SOMETHING WE COULD MAINTAIN OURSELVES.

SO GOOD, HONEST MAGIC-- OR AS HONEST AS IT GETS FROM ME.



ALL RIGHT. LET'S START WITH A SIMPLE STEPPING-DISC THROUGH *LIBMO* AND SEE HOW THAT GOES.

I'M NO *ILLYANA RASPUTIN*. BUT I THINK I CAN CAST ONE WITHOUT ANY MAJOR--





BUT THERE IS SOMETHING
IN THIS WRETCH'S
APPEARANCE THAT
STIRS A MEMORY
OF OLD.

IF I COULD
BETTER SEE
HIS FACE...

UUGH...
HRRRR...



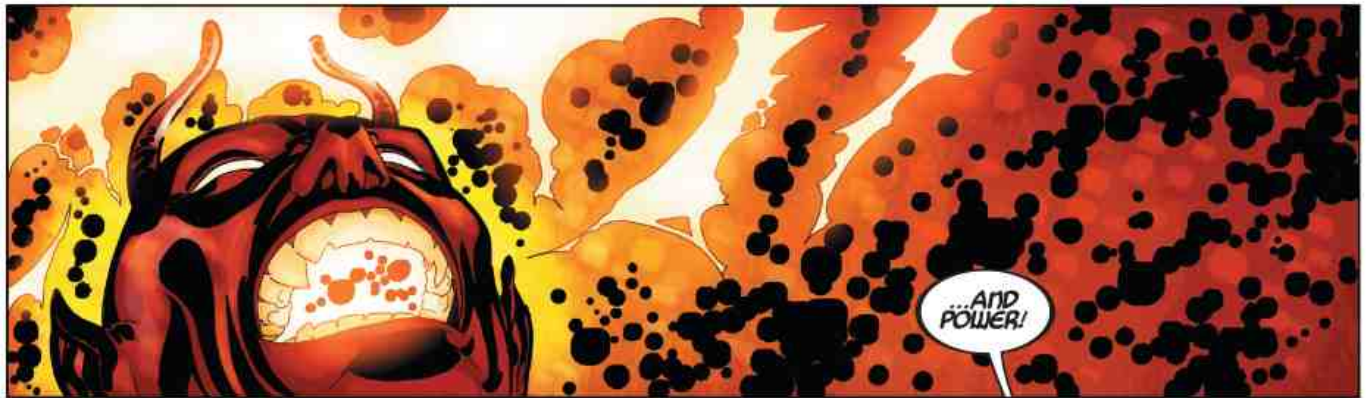
RRRAARRRHHH!



I WAS
RIGHT.

'TIS
DARKOCH--
THE DEATH
DEMON!

you KNOW
HIM...?



There is no sound.

Save for the cracking of the earth...

...and the hissing of seared flesh.

OD'S BLOOD.

HIS DEMON-BLAST IS STRONGER THAN E'ER BEFORE...

YOU THINK? DID THE SECOND-DEGREE BURNS TIP YOU OFF?

I'VE HEALED FROM WORSE. 'TIS ASGARD THAT IS IN DANGER SHOULD DARKOTH REMAIN LOOSE...

OH? WE'RE NOT CALLING HIM BY HIS NAME?

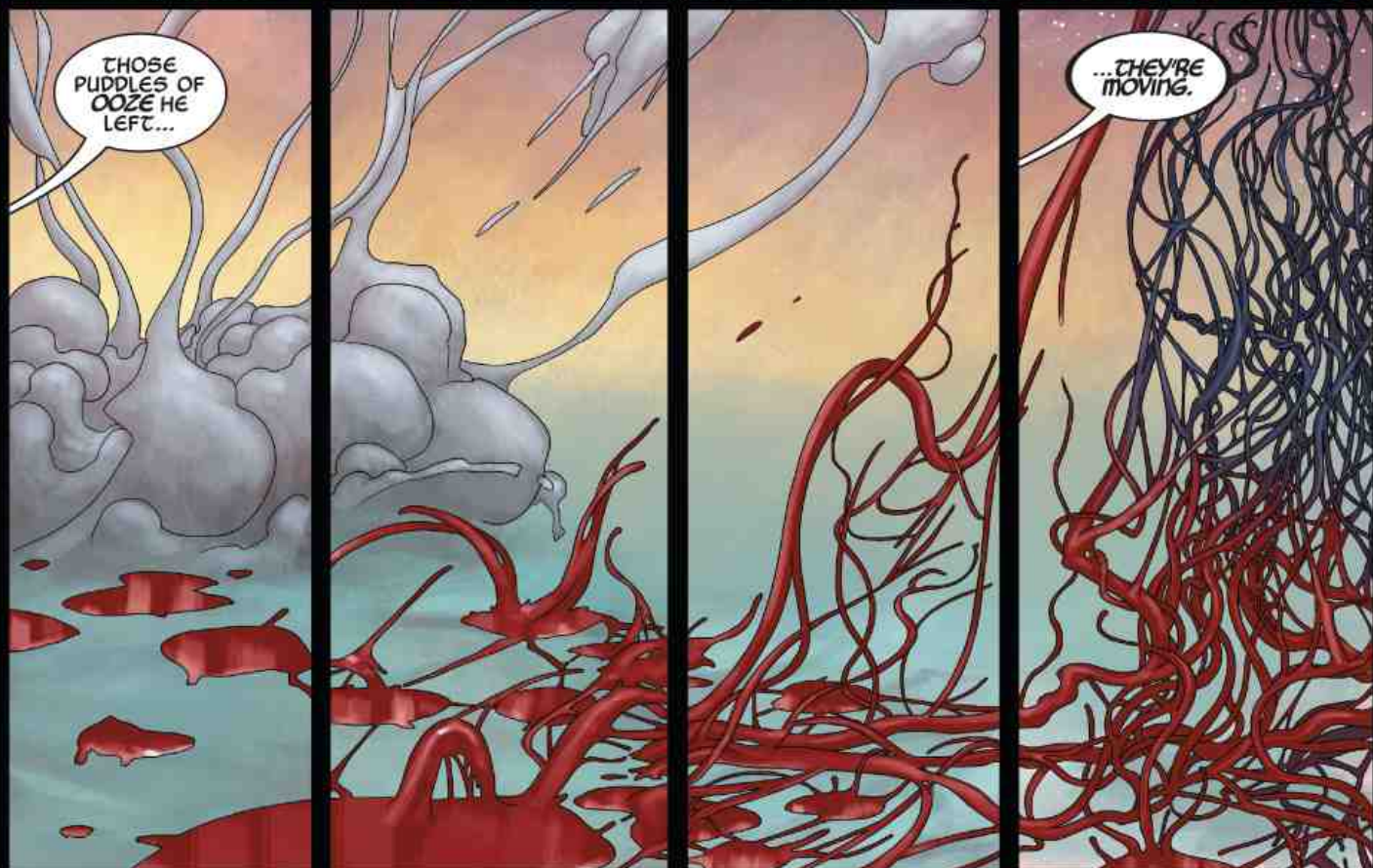
DESMOND THE DEATH DEMON DOESN'T WORK FOR ANYONE ELSE?



IF IT *WAS* DESMOND PITT WHO WE FACED, I WOULD SAY SO, LOKI.

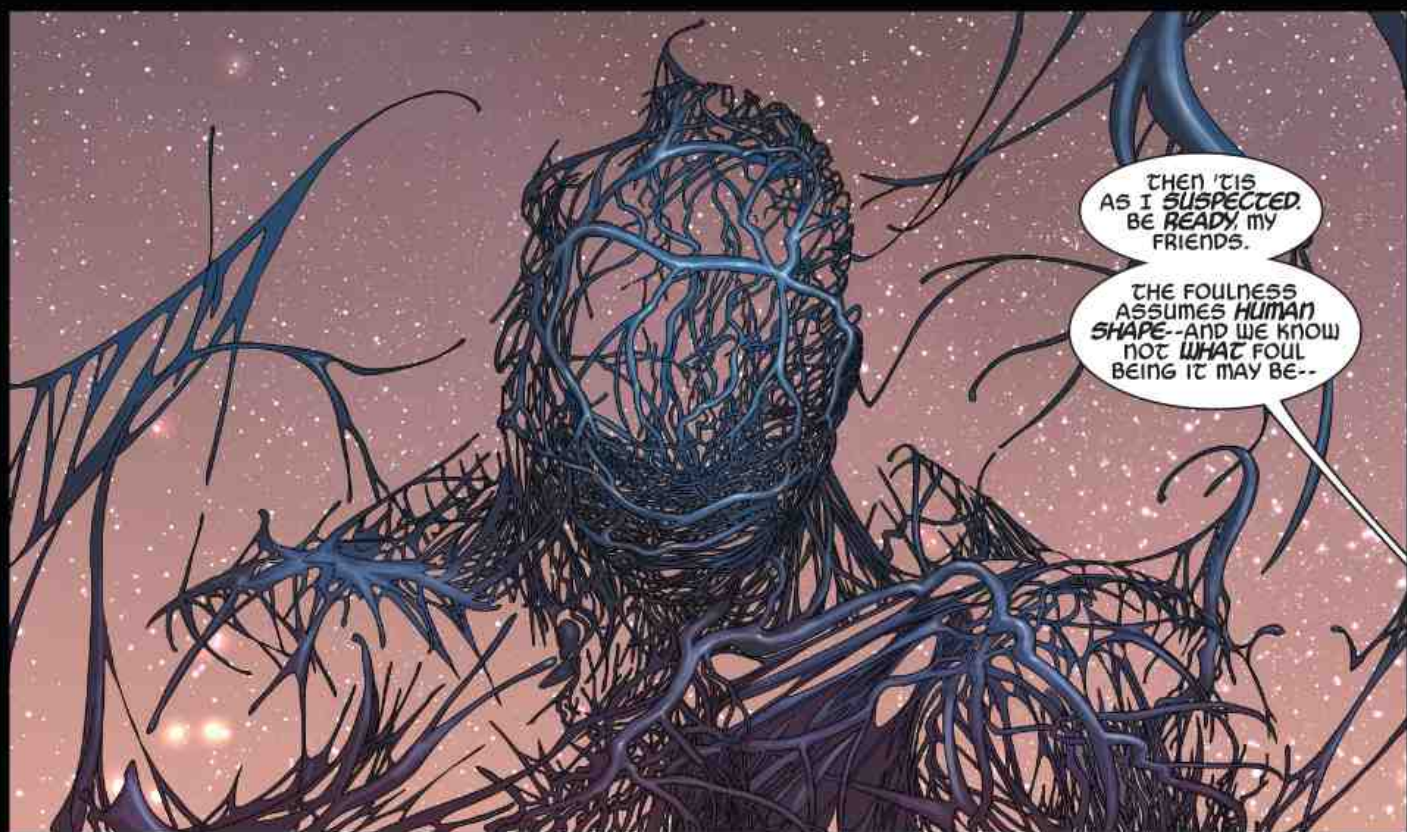
BUT I FEAR THAT NOBLE MAN IS NO LONGER IN CONTROL...

THOR.
LOOK.



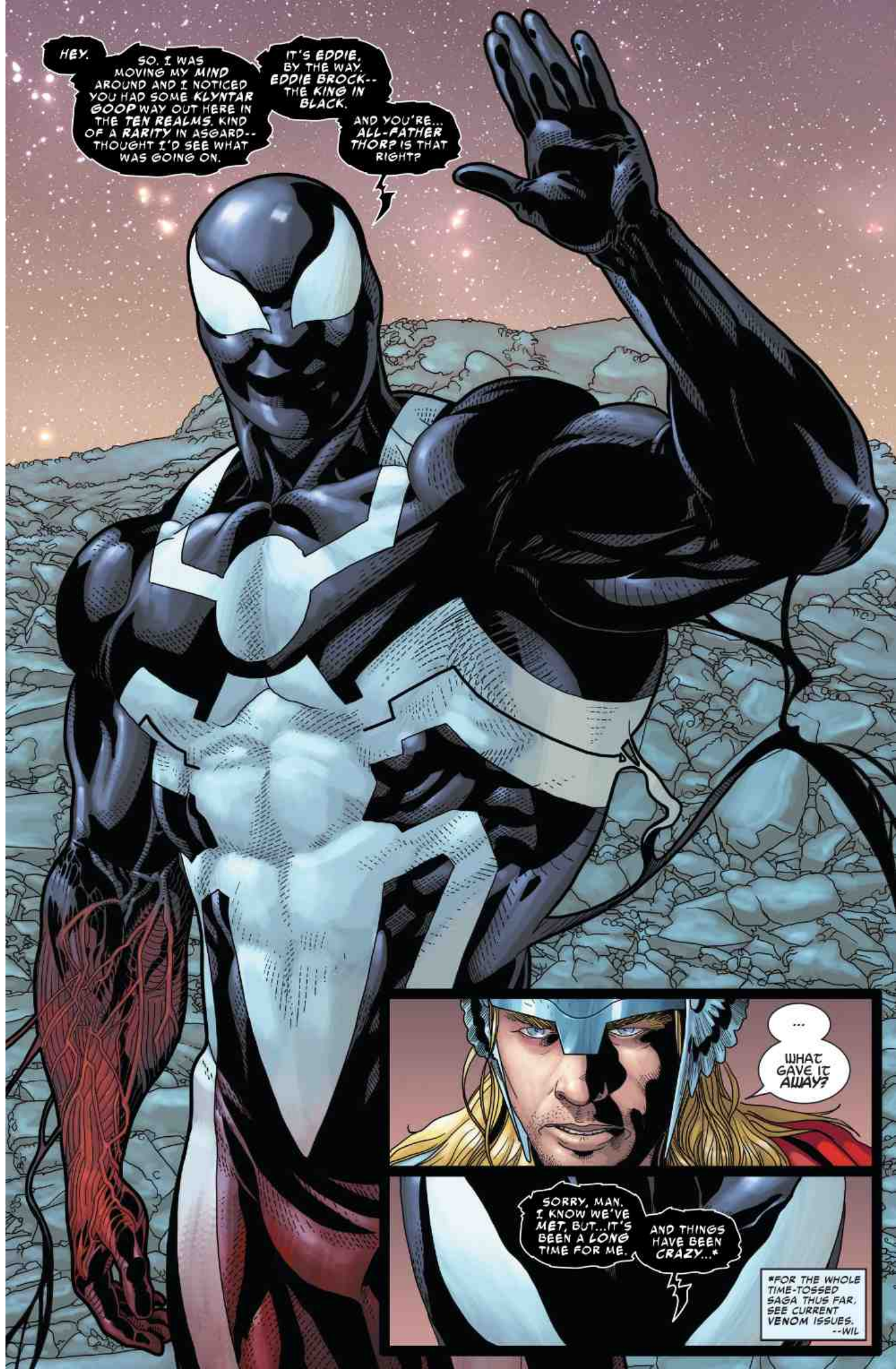
THOSE PUDDLES OF OOZE HE LEFT...

...THEY'RE MOVING.



THEN 'TIS AS I *SUSPECTED*. BE READY, MY FRIENDS.

THE FOULNESS ASSUMES *HUMAN* SHAPE--AND WE KNOW NOT *WHAT* FOUL BEING IT MAY BE--



HEY.

SO, I WAS
MOVING MY MIND
AROUND AND I NOTICED
YOU HAD SOME KLYNTAR
GOOP WAY OUT HERE IN
THE TEN REALMS. KIND
OF A RARITY IN ASGARD--
THOUGHT I'D SEE WHAT
WAS GOING ON.

IT'S EDDIE.
BY THE WAY,
EDDIE BROCK--
THE KING IN
BLACK.

AND YOU'RE...
ALL-FATHER
THORP IS THAT
RIGHT?



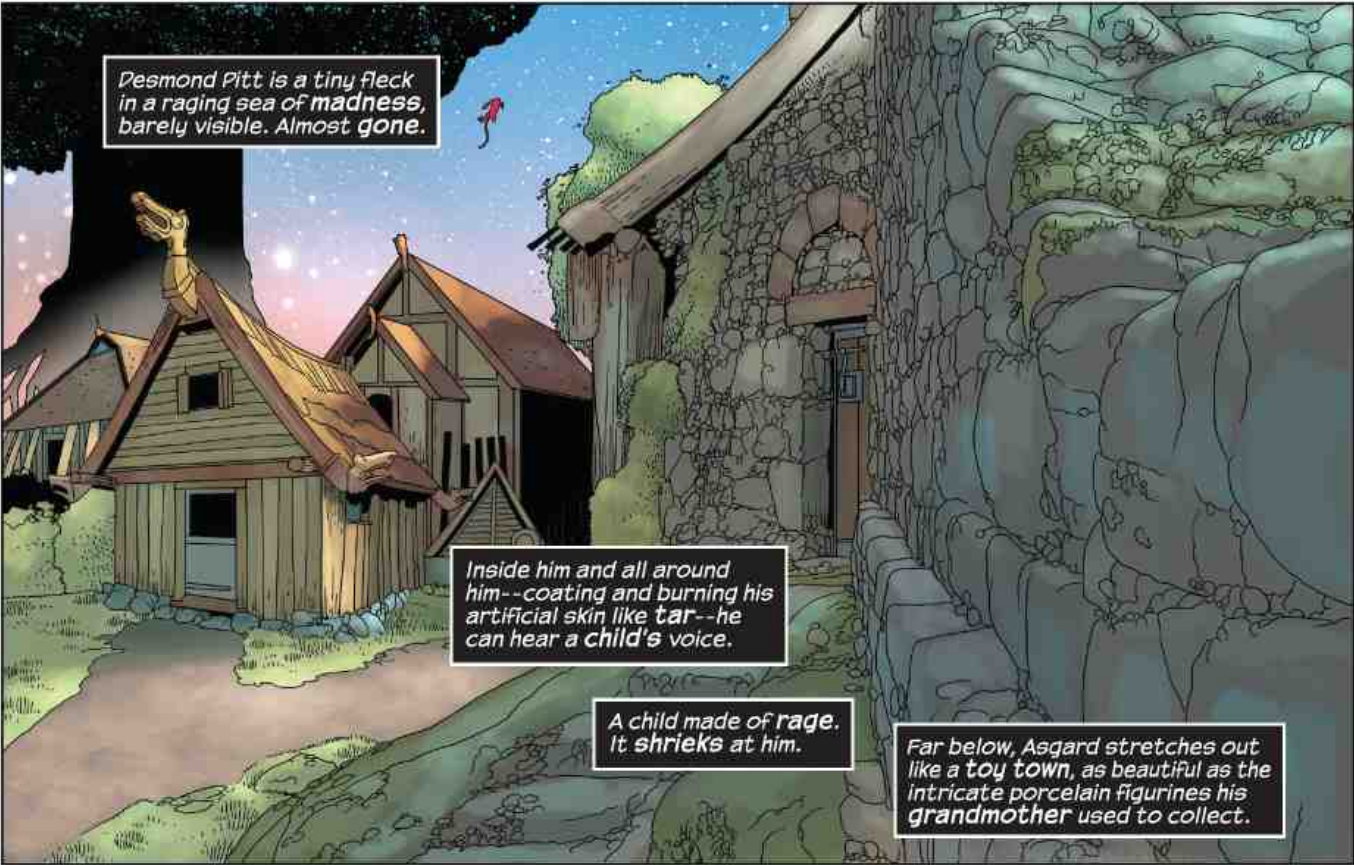
...
WHAT
GAVE IT
AWAY?



SORRY, MAN.
I KNOW WE'VE
MET, BUT...IT'S
BEEN A LONG
TIME FOR ME.

AND THINGS
HAVE BEEN
CRAZY...*

*FOR THE WHOLE
TIME-TOSSED
SAGA THUS FAR,
SEE CURRENT
VENOM ISSUES.
--WIL



Desmond Pitt is a tiny fleck in a raging sea of madness, barely visible. Almost gone.

Inside him and all around him--coating and burning his artificial skin like tar--he can hear a child's voice.

A child made of rage. It shrieks at him.

Far below, Asgard stretches out like a toy town, as beautiful as the intricate porcelain figurines his grandmother used to collect.



This one even has little toy people...

I SPY, WITH MY LITTLE EYE... A DEMON.

IT BODES ILL, FANDRAL.



HE HAS A CERTAIN GOOEY CHARM, HOGUN. LET'S TALK TO THE FELLOW.

HO, STRANGER--HILDEGARDE SAYS STATE THY BUSINESS!

AND IF 'TIS FEASTING AND MERRIMENT, THEN YOU'VE A BOON COMPANION IN VOLSTAGG! NE'ER LET IT BE SAID THAT THE WARRIORS FOUR WERE SLOW TO WELCOME A...



...A FRIENDLY FACE...

...and the screaming child says they all must die.









...THANKS FOR BREAKING THAT UP, THOR. BEDLAM'S CHILD IS TOUGHER THAN I THOUGHT.

HE'S GOT FULL CONTROL OVER THE PROMETHIUM IN DARKOTH'S BODY--HELL-METAL FROM THE DEPTHS OF LIMBO THAT CAN HURT EVEN ME.



RIGHT NOW, HE'S USING THE POWER IN IT INSTINCTIVELY-- BUT HE'S LEARNING ALL THE TIME.

HE'LL TRY TO IMPOSE HIS WILL ON IT. SHAPE IT, FORM IT INTO A WEAPON...



...AND WHAT'S THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON HE CAN SEE HERE?

The child does not understand the words. But it senses a great power inside its helpless host.

One it can call forth...



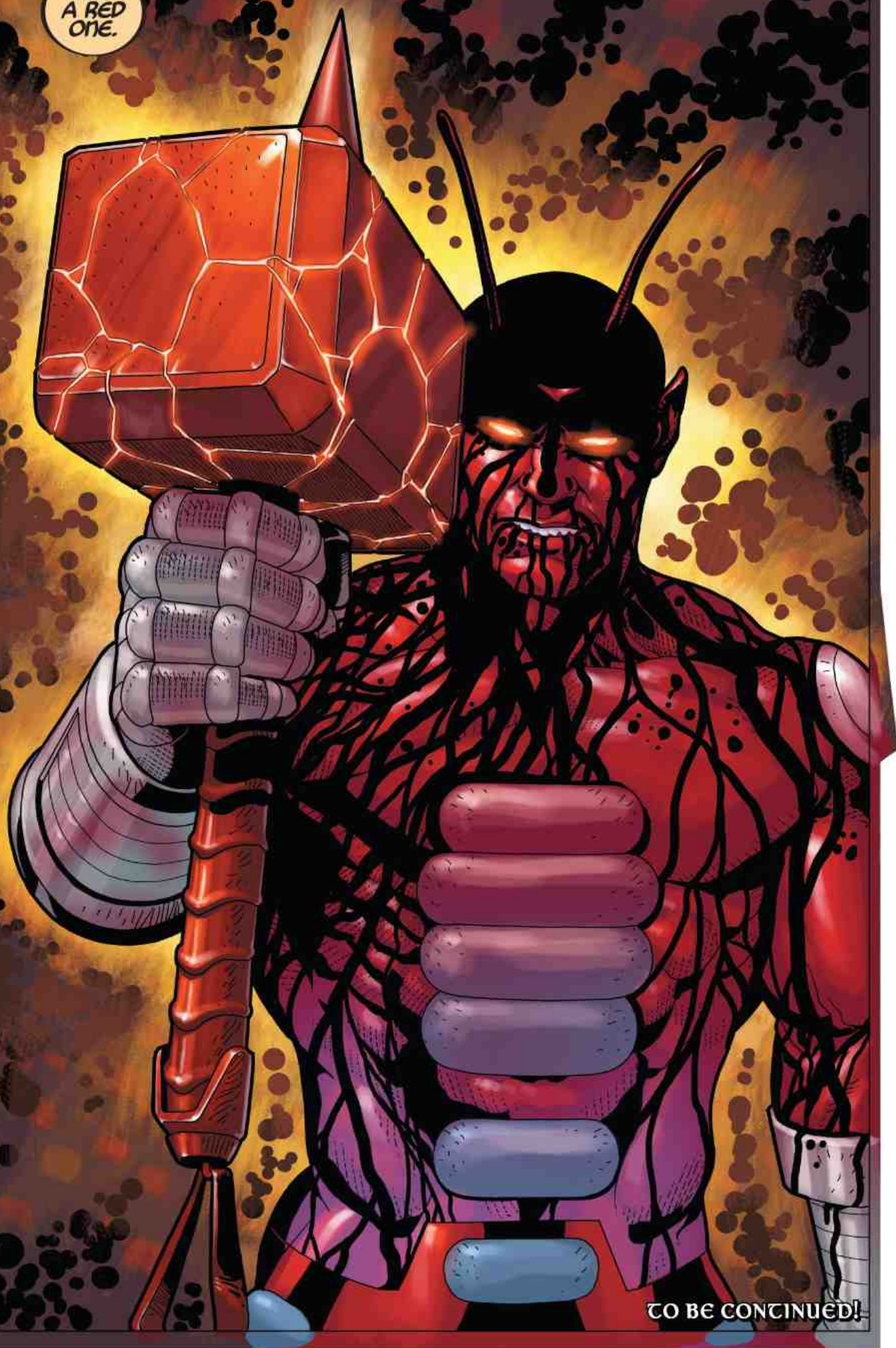
...if it is worthy.

BURI'S BONES.

AYE. SOME ILL TIDINGS FOR THEE, MY SON.

I FEAR THAT...

...IS
A RED
ONE.



TO BE CONTINUED!

QUOTH THE RAVENS: THE HUGINN & MUNINN SHOW

WRITE TO US AT MHEROES@MARVEL.COM
AND MARK YOUR MISSIVES "OKAY TO PRINT."



Blessed day, Huginn! After the difficult travels and aiding Lady Sif in the All-Father's most recent battle, we finally have a moment's rest to answer the missives! You can finally stop bemoaning how you've missed them.

Do not mislead the mortals, Muninn. It is not that I have craved communication with them! It is only that answering their missives is the only way in which we may set the records straight and remind the Midgardians to whom they owe their stories!

My mistake, Huginn. Next time I hear you lamenting how our duties have kept you from communicating with the Midgardians, I will try to remember that it is only your fragile ego. On to the first letter, from our comrade!

Aye! Here I am again, Huginn and Muninn, ye who be the concepts of Thought and Memory, all the Imagination of the Ten Realms on the mighty World Ash, Yggdrasil! I have come once again to fuel you with faith that can make you fly across all reality in the span of a zeptosecond! (Unless, that is, you've enough power to already do, but I highly doubt it, hah! Better make sure you confirm you do!)

Enough of my fancy talk--but, for real, truly I am surprised and happy with the recent issues! Like, gods be damned, it explains my suspicions about lore in general. I mean, no wonder the enchantments were going haywire: The God of Hammers, Mjolnir herself--and Mangog--were behind it all!

Not to mention, Thor harnessing the powers he inherited from his birth mother, Gaea, and exceeding her in power. And, of course, my dearest respects to Odin, sacrificing himself to give the full power of the Odin-Force to his son, when he only had a fraction of the power, thus truly making him the All-Father of the Ten Realms!

As such, I've come to ask some questions (again!) in an attempt to help you reminisce on the good ol' times you had with the late All-Father:

Did you meet Odin when he was a child? When he was still wandering with his family in the time-before-time, as seen in Thor #619, the time that ended when Bor planted the seed that soon birthed all that is, the World Tree, everything?

What were your funnest travels with him? I bet you'd occasionally make fools of some villainous giant by tricking him into a portal of a realm of ideas and concepts boundless, created by your one-eyed compatriot! As well as being curious when he, with his bare hands, imprisoned the mightiest of the Elder Gods, the God Tempest, in uru!

Which was the best weapon he created? Must be the Odinsword! Ah, I bet when Odin was creating the Odinsword--Ragnarok (its true name as revealed in Fear Itself #6), a weapon that can bring down the Multiverse-destroying, Eternity-devourer Cul Borson--chills must've went down so fast, your feathers must've fallen off, hah!

Anyway, thanks again to the team for this great "God of Hammers" saga, that answered my questions, cleared my suspicions, and allowing me to chat with the ravens that fly across the Ten Realms in a second to bring a message for their All-Father!

By the way, in the name of the Gods of the Elder, damn the God of Hammers to the lowest pits of Hell!

Helena Cromwell,
Comrade in Arms of Huginn and Muninn
San Diego, CA

Lady Helena, how lovely to hear from you! Ah, to reminisce on our early days with young King Odin... Huginn, what would you call our favorite memories with his majesty?

I particularly enjoyed every time he would leave a feast for us. King Odin was a true lover of the feast, and it was most fitting that we should reap the benefits!

Why does this answer not surprise me? However, I must agree that there were a great many feasts--some held in our honor, some not, and even when we were not honored, we were able to feast! A pity that Midgardian ravens are not half so blessed as we. Ah, but Lady Helen, how impressive to hold such a deep and vast memory of Odin's long, long life--truly you are our comrade in arms! A keeper of stories yourself, are you? What wonderful news to know you have been enjoying the tales as rendered by Master Donny and Master Nic--we will pass your joy to them!

Dear Huginn and Muninn:

Birds running a letters page where emails act as prayers... Truly, if this isn't the Marvel Age of Revolutionary Communication! Pardon my flippantness, your Magisterial Flippantnesses, but I came to Thor #750 from Donny Cates' other book, the equally supreme Hulk, and am feeling a bit out of my depth at the moment. Please inform Mr. Cates that he's doing a great job supplying stellar stories for both characters and that I hope "Banner of War" is one of his finest hours as a top-tier creative force.

My belated condolences to all in Asgard regarding the passing of Odin. I can relate to Thor's sentiments a bit, having been able to sample his adventures across several decades. I didn't like it when Odin restricted Thor's movements or decision-making, but I understood that such edicts generally came from a place of loving and just wanting to see his son develop into a better person, which (thank the gods!) the Odinson has indeed managed to become. The revelation that his spirit is apparently inside Mjolnir now strikes me as ironic, sad, hilarious, disappointing and strangely fitting all at once. It's a darn near perfect role reflecting all the best and worst qualities of the man himself, and I look forward to seeing him evolve into something more than a mere tool (ahem).

Now if only I hadn't seen Mjolnir hurling toward my favorite not-so-jolly Jade Giant at the end of Hulk #6, I might've felt inclined to back Ol' Thunder Thighs in the coming conflict. However, I've been a Hulk booster for much longer, and when I see him about to be attacked seemingly without sound reason or evidence of wrongdoing, I tend to naturally favor Banner. No offense, bird brains, but your new ruler might've just made the worst decision of his incumbent reign. A conflict like this tends to make Hulk exceptionally angry, and you don't want to see him become the World Breaker when he's sufficiently angry, if you catch my drift.

I wish both combatants a good, clean, Multiverse-mashing fight. Save me a ringside seat!

Sincerely,
Ben Kellogg

Bird brains? Why, this disrespect--I will have you know, young mortal, that an Asgardian raven's intellect is not to be undermined, and without it, you would never have learned of these mythical tales you so enjoy!

Ah, Huginn, what is it you're always saying? "The humans may handle a bit of ribbing"? Surely it is only fair for them to be permitted to jest in return! However, I must say, what a surprise to hear from a fan of Mr. Hulk on our letters page! It was quite the battle... What a terrible thing, to see friends turned against one another!

Pah! As if the All-Father would not be more than capable of showing Master Banner precisely what it means to be the King of Asgard even without the trickery of these gamma explosions! And for Master Banner to have to turn to the borrowed power of our late king... Perhaps this foolish mortal should know into which gilded hoop to throw his bonnet!

Huginn, do you mean... "Throw his hat into the ring"?

That is what I said.

Hey Ravens,

Two thoughts about Thor 24/750:

1) Once I realized that Odin was talking to Thor through Mjolnir, I couldn't help but think of the bizarre '60s comedy *My Mother the Car*, in which Jerry Van Dyke's mother was reincarnated as an antique automobile.

2) I swooned with delight at Al Ewing's homage to Jack Kirby dialogue in "What Comes Next"--the quotation marks! "Macroverbal weirdies"! Multiple exclamation points!!! I felt like a kid buying Kirby's Fourth World and, later, Captain America and the Eternals.

Just finished rereading Donny Cates' Thor run (so far). It recalls Lee/Kirby's brilliant inventiveness without aping it. Well done!

Rich Scharf
St. Louis, MO

Why, in fact, once upon a time we gave one of the young Master Van Dykes a vision about souls reincarnating into chariots, in knowing our visions of the future... It is a relief to hear that the story did not go untold! Though perhaps not as intended--anyhoo, Master Rich, with your delight at Master Al's transcription, we hope you equally delight in his transcribing of this latest tale! Midgard bears such gifted scribes, and we are fortunate to have their talents weaving our stories.

The Midgardians are acceptable, yes. Though it has been some time since we were able to spare a moment to answer missives thanks to the long flight from Asgard to Midgard without the Blifrost in place... have you all forgotten who the true storykeepers are?

Ah, Huginn, you and your pride. I assure you, they have not forgotten! These missives are far too expertly crafted for that. And if they are marked "OKAY TO PRINT," we may respond to them!

NEXT: TWO KINGS AND A DEATH DEMON!



